

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3555

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PBOR ET SO

SUBJECT: HORN OF AFRICA: BRITISH TALK WITH SOMALI

AMBASSADOR: HMG STUDIES ON ANTICIPATED

HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS

SUMMARY. BOTH SOMALI AND ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADORS RETURNED TO LONDON THIS WEEK FROM CONSULTATIONS WITH THEIR GOVERNMENTS. SOMALI AMBASSADOR CONVEYED TO HMG APPRAISAL THAT THREAT OF ETHIOPIAN ATTACK NOT AS IMMINENT AS SOME REPORTS WOULD HAVE IT; ALSO, SOMALIS WONDERING WHETHER WESTERN POWERS, ESPECIALLY U.S., NOW COMMITTED TO CONCEP OF AUTONOMY FOR OGADEN RATHER THAN REMAINING OPEN-MINDED ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF SELF-DETERMINATION. MEANWHILE, BRITISH ARE DRAFTING PAPERS ON (1) HOW TO PROTECT OGADEN RESIDENTS AFTER ETHIOPIA REGAINS CONTROL AND (2) HOW TO

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HANDLE MASS OF REFUGEES AND RETURNEES EXPECTED TO FLOW INTO SOMALIA FROM OGADEN. END SUMMARY.

1. FCO EAST AFRICAN DEPARTMENT HEAD MUNROE TOLD EMBOFF FEB 24 THAT SOMALI AMBASSADOR SAW MINISTER OF STATE ROWLANDS AFTER RETURNING THIS WEEK FROM MOGADISCIO. ASIDE FROM PROJECTING SOMALI DISAPPOINTMENT AT WEST'S

FAILURE TO SUPPLY ARMS, AMBASSADOR SAID SOMALIS REGARD REPORTS OF IMMINENCE OF EXPECTED ETHIOPIAN ATTACK AS EXAGGERATED. ATTACK MIGHT COME, BUT IT WAS NOT IMMINENT MEANWHILE, SOMALIS WERE HOLDING ETHIOPIANS OFF.

2. AMBASSADOR SAID SOMALIS WERE HOPEFUL THAT OAU MIGHT BACK SELF-DETERMINATION FOR OGADEN. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT SIAD HAD SET FORTH ACCEPTANCE OF SELF-DETERMINATION AS A PRECONDITION FOR SOMALI WITHDRAWAL, THIS OUGHT NOT NECESSARILY NOW TO BE CONSTRUED AS AN ABSOLUTE PRECONDITION. (NOTE: MUNROE SAID BRITISH SAW A RAY OF HOPE IN THIS FUZZY STATEMENT AND ASKED AMBASSADOR TO CHECK THE POINT OUT EXPLICITLY WITH SIAD.)

3. ACCORDING TO MUNROE, SOMALI AMBASSADOR ALSO MENTIONED THAT SOMALIS SAW SOME DIFFERENCES BETWEEN REPLIES GIVEN THEM BY U.S., UK, AND FRANCE IN RESPONSE TO THEIR REQUEST FOR MILITARY AID. THE U.S. REPLY MENTIONED "AUTONOMY" FOR OGADEN. SOMALIS WONDERING WHETHER THIS MEANT WEST WAS COMMITTED TO AUTONOMY AND NO LONGER / OPEN-MINDED. BRITISH REPLIED THAT AUTONOMY WAS ONE OF THE POSSIBLE OPTIONS, UK DID NOT THINK THAT SELF-DETERMINATION WAS LIKELY, BUT HMG FOR ITS PART WAS CERTAINLY NOT PREJUDGING ANY OUTCOME; SOMALIA MUST WITHDRAW AND SEE WHAT IT COULD GET OUT OF IT.

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4. MUNROE ALSO TOLD EMBOFF THAT ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR AYALEW HAD RETURNED TO LONDON EARLIER THIS WEEK FROM HIS CONSULTATIONS IN ADDIS. AMBASSADOR WAS AMIABLE IN INFORMAL CALL AT FCO, BUT SAID NOTHING OF INTEREST OTHER THAN HE THOUGHT UK MIGHT BE GETTING A LETTER FROM MENGISTU.

5. MUNROE SAID THAT FCO WAS NOW ADDRESSING ITSELF TO TWO UPCOMING ISSUES WHICH COULD BE EXPECTED TO BE TROUBLESOME: (A) HOW TO SECURE POSITION AND SAFETY OF OGADENESE WHO REMAIN THERE AFTER SOMALIS WITHDRAW OR ARE ROUTED, SINCE CHANCES OF REPRISALS ARE HIGH; AND (B) WHAT TO DO WHEN REFUGEES AND RETURNEES FLOCK INTO SOMALIA, A SITUATION WHICH WILL NECESSITATE A MASSIVE INTERNATIONAL EFFORT IN WHICH THE WESTERN COUNTRIES OUGHT TO BE SEEN AMONG THOSE TAKING THE LEAD. BRITISH EXPECT TO COMPLETE PAPERS ON THESE SUBJECTS IN ABOUT A WEEK AND WILL PASS THEM AROUND TO U.S. AND OTHERS. MEANWHILE, BRITISH HOPE WE ARE DOING SOMETHING IN PARALLEL.

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